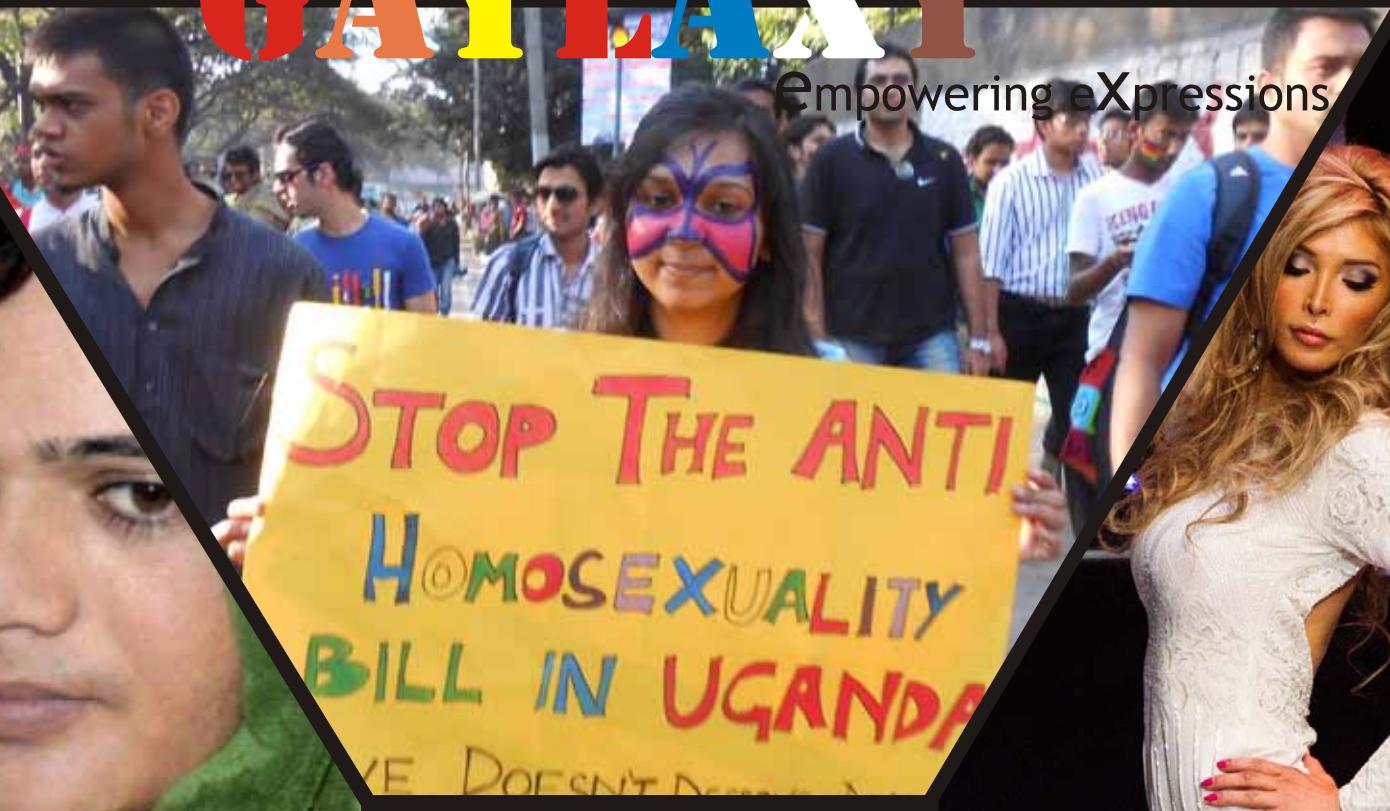


GAYLAXY

Empowering eXpressions

2012



The Year In Review

A photograph of two shirtless men with dark hair and beards. They are wearing white briefs and are posed in a close embrace, with one man's arm around the other's shoulder. They are looking directly at the camera with serious expressions.

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GAYLAXY

Empowering Expressions

Volume 3 | Issue 5 | Nov-Dec 2012

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Editor's Note

Here we are, with what is supposed to be the last issue of 2012, and we seem to be a little late for that, but hey, better late than never. Our New Year resolution is thus to be more punctual with our issues, and if you would like to help us keep it, you can always drop a mail to me. So yes, we shall come out with a Jan-Feb issue in February.

In this issue, we look back at what the year 2012 meant for gay rights, both across the world and in India. The year sure saw gay rights moving a step forward, especially in USA and Europe, while in India, the stalemate continued as the Supreme Court didn't deliver any final verdict on the issue of decriminalization of homosexuality.

November and December saw gay pride marches happening in Delhi, Bangalore and Pune. However, unlike previous years, the pride march in Delhi and Bangalore were held on different dates. Anirban tells us how he rediscovered his own self in the pride parade in Bangalore this year. In response to the cover story of our last issue, 'Gay Rights: A Political Vote', Saurabh Sharma pens down his thoughts on why we should start talking to political parties about 'our' issues, and how we can achieve that. Saad Zahid shares his apprehensions about being gay in a Muslim society and wonders if he will ever be able to live a life he wants to.

Many queer Indian movies were on a European tour along with Sridhar Rangayan. Tanika Godbole talks to Sridhar about the tour in detail. In this issue, there are some interesting articles on relationships. While Moiz's confession letter to his 'sweetheart' is something every broken hearted person would love to send his/her lover, Karan Sood explores the complexities of cheating in a committed relationship.

That's all in this issue. I will be participating in the Mumbai Pride in Feb 2013, do say a Hi if you see me. Have a very happy and prosperous New Year ahead.

Love

Sukhi



Sukhiman

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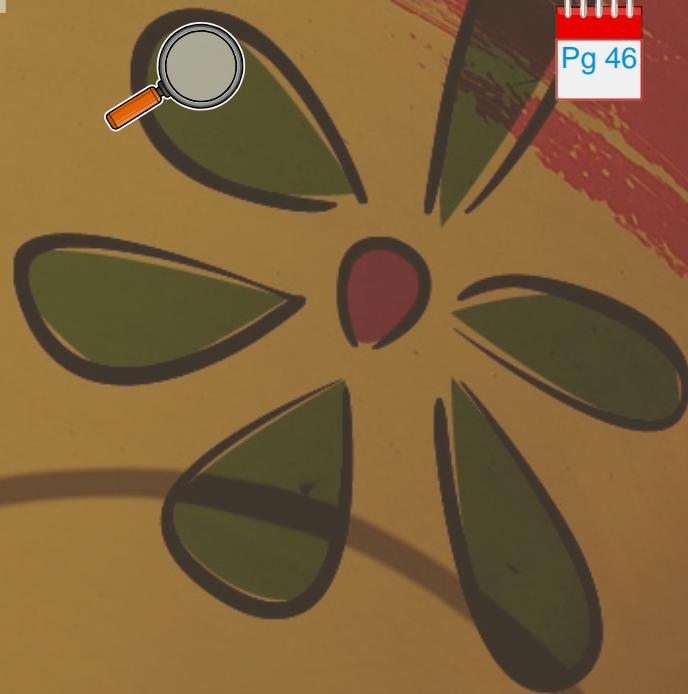
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LET'S CELEBRATE THE FESTIVAL OF COLOURS WITH FLOWERS!





THE YEAR OF GAY RIGHTS

2012 is going to be remembered as the year of gay rights across the world, writes **Bharathi**

People said when 2012 started that the world is going to end this year. But it was the hate mongers world that ended this year. 2012 is going to go down in history as the year of gay civil rights.

Even though there were a lot of victories for LGBT rights in 2011, I consider US secretary of State, Hillary Clinton's United Nations speech, declaring "Gay rights are human rights and human

rights are gay rights" in front of the entire world (including some homophobic leaders) as THE moment for LGBT community. (If any of you haven't checked it out yet, it's in YouTube, please do)

But 2012 was very different. Let's start at home. A lot of the metropolitan cities organized gay pride parades successfully. Though Indian government and the Supreme Court had a chance to be on the right side of history, they

pretty much screwed it up. But America and Europe didn't.

America proved once again, it is the pioneer in LGBT civil rights. The year started on a low note but ended with a bang.

In February, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie vetoed a bill to legalize gay marriage, which was even approved by his state legislators. In May, North Carolina banned gay marriage in their state by an overwhelming majority. Chick-



Hillary Clinton making at the UN supporting Gay Rights

Fil-A, a famous fast food chain's president attacked gay marriage but was supported by a lot of haters. So did a lot of religious pastors, some of them even said that gays and lesbians should be put inside an electrified fence and left to die. But other than that the year was pretty good for gay Americans.

The biggest moment came when the world's most powerful President, Barack Obama came out in support of full equality for LGBT community along with Gay Marriage. He ran on a pro-gay platform against everyone's opinion that it might harm his chances of re-election, and still got re-elected. It was in stark contrast to the Republican candidate Mitt Romney and his party which ran on a predominantly anti-gay platform. They wanted to amend the American constitution to ban gay people from marrying. In Rachel Maddow's word "the republicans got shellacked

and they never saw it coming".

People said this was the gayest election ever. Till now any state or country which had legalized gay marriage had done it through courts or elected representatives. After losing in 30 states, for the first time in history, millions of people from four states in America said, 'Enough is enough; no one should stop loving committed same sex couples from marrying'. Maryland -with a large African-American population (who are mostly anti-gay),

Maine -which four years ago banned gay marriage, and the state of Washington; all legalized gay marriage through popular vote at the ballot. In Minnesota, a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage got defeated by the people. All of this happened even when the homophobic religious organizations spearheaded by the Vatican tried so hard to stop it.

Every anti-gay, anti-abortion candidate lost, with the exceptions of a few. (The anti-gay Michelle Bachmann who wanted to run for the presidential election barely held on to her senate seat in Minnesota). America elected a record number of openly gay candidates to office, along with Tammy Baldwin, who became the first openly gay person to win a senate seat, the highest seat in the country. A measure to remove the judge who legalized gay marriage in Iowa got defeated and the judge kept his seat.

It was not only a year of celebration but a year of justice too. Hate crime laws



Tyler Clementi



Dharun Ravi

which are used to prosecute homophobic persons for harming a person just because they are gay, saw its first prosecution. Tyler Clementi, a college freshman who committed suicide because his roommate filmed him having sex with a man, got justice. The room-mate Dharun Ravi was an Indian origin student who was found guilty on many counts including invasion of privacy and bias intimidation.

Around the world gay rights achieved remarkable progress. Great Britain and France has two remarkable Prime Ministers fighting a strong opposition raised by the homophobic Vatican and their churches. They are still strongly going forward with their plans to legalize gay marriage in their respective countries. And it looks like Australia and Uruguay are not far behind.

Spain's highest court refused to repeal gay marriage which is already in existence. In Mexico the Supreme Court unanimously decided to make gay marriages legal all over the country. Denmark's parliament and four states in

Everywhere you turned there were openly gay people. They ruled the media. A lot of celebrities came out

Brazil legalized same sex marriage. Italy's highest civil court said that homosexuals have the right to "a family life" and, "in specific situations," to "be treated the same as couples married by law". Despite hostility and police arrests, Uganda held its first pride festival in August and concluded it with a pride walk. Miss Universe Canada, Jenna Talackova was disqualified from taking part in the Miss Universe beauty pageant for being a transgendered woman. However, after an international outcry, the organizers allowed her to take part in the contest, though she couldn't win it.

In Russia this year, gay rights met a major setback when the government passed a law to ban people from talking about homosexuality in the public. Queer icons, Madonna and Lady Gaga came to the rescue. Both defied the law in their concerts held in Russia and asked the crowd to stand up for gay rights. The anti-gay lobby filed a law suit against Madonna, which was thrown out by the Russian court amid hilarious arguments from the other



Anderson Cooper,
CNN News Anchor

side.

Everywhere you turned there were openly gay people. They ruled the media. The voice of reason, Rachel Maddow, MSNBC's prime time news anchor and CNN's Anderson Cooper, the most prominent news anchor of this generation were covering the election. Nate Silver, a gay statistician correctly predicted the presidential election to the very last seat. Even in India a few movies (Student of the Year, English Vinglish) and TV shows started addressing gay relationships and gay people respectfully.

A lot of celebrities came out in a matter of fact way. Frank Ocean (hip-hop artist - MTV's man of the year), Matt Bomer (the hot lead from White Collar and Magic Mike, who has a partner and 3 kids), Jim Parson (the hugely popular Sheldon Cooper from Big Bang Theory, who has a long time partner of 10 years), Andrew Rennells (from The New Normal and HBO's Girls),



TV Series- The New Normal



Lana Wachowski (Matrix director and writer, who came out as a transgender woman), Sam Champion (the weather man from the popular Good Morning America, who got married to his boyfriend this December), Orlando Cruz (the feather weight boxer from Puerto Rico) and of course CNN's Anderson Cooper all came out as gay and nothing happened to their career. They joined already out and successful stars like talk show host Ellen DeGeneres, Neil Patrick Harris (Barney Stinson of How I Met your Mother, who has a partner and has twins), Jesse Tyler Ferguson (Mitch of Modern Family who got engaged to his boyfriend this year), Zachary Quinto (Heroes and Star Trek), Chris Colfer and Jane Lynch of Glee. The taboo of being gay and successful was broken!

The American Psychiatric Association decided to remove being transgender as a mental illness this year. The 2012 London Olympics saw a lot of openly gay athletes and a lot of them went home with medals. Nepal this year organized a sports event specifically for LGBT population. Google launched "legalize love", a campaign to support LGBT safety and

We are everywhere and from 2013 we will run the world

equality in workplace in Poland and Singapore and are planning to spread all over the world, including countries where anti-gay sentiments run high. Facebook added gay marriage icons to its web page when one of its founders, Chris Hughes married his boyfriend this summer. Every major company including Amazon, Microsoft, Walt Disney, Ford, UPS, Pepsi, Target, Macy's, General Mills, Starbucks, P&G, JC Penny, Levi's and countless others came out in support of LGBT equality. (Make sure you are buying their products.)

The year ended with US Supreme Court making a decision to hear the so called Defense of marriage act, which prohibits US government from recognizing gay marriage and the Prop 8 case (voter approved ban of gay marriage in California.) If won, it might make gay marriage legal all over America.

There is a lot to hope for and fear for in 2013. Like Kill the Gays Bill in Uganda's Parliament and the forever enemy of LGBT community - the Pope. He has taken anti-gay messages to a new level by condemning gay marriage even in his yearly message of so called 'Peace', calling us a threat to peace and saying that we live in a different reality. But don't worry friends; he is just an angry old man who is fighting a losing battle.

Tell your friends; tell your families not to fear for us. Gays are successful in every profession. When your friend takes out an iPhone tell him the CEO of Apple, Tim Cook is gay. Every major company has gay employees at their top positions. If someone is looking at stock market, tell him the Wall Street is controlled by gays. If they talk about Harvard, Yale or any other top university, tell them every fourth guy there is gay. If they talk about astronauts, tell them that Sally Field, the first woman to go to Space was a lesbian. Yes it's true; we haven't even left the space. We are everywhere and from 2013 we will run the world.



2012



A MIXED YEAR FOR INDIA

Sukhdeep Singh reviews what the year 2012 meant for India

2012 has been a mixed year for India's LGBTs. On a lighter note, we know that the world didn't end as it was supposed to, but we also know that neither has the homophobia. The year began on a not so happy note when a fundraiser party for the Mumbai Queer Pride was targeted by the police on the behest of one Haji Ahmed Bawa. Later that month, Mumbai was also witness to Asia's first gay flash mob. The month of January ended with





Onir's I AM won the National Award for the Best Hindi Film

the city holding the Queer Azadi March.

February was the month that gave a lot of butterflies in the stomach, when the Supreme Court finally began hearing the petitions filed against the decriminalization of homosexuality. The court began hearing the anti-gay petitioners first, and some of the arguments presented by the petitioners were hysterical. The Govt. of India kept flip-flopping its stand,

with the Additional Solicitor General (ASG) P P Malhotra, appearing on behalf of the Union Home Ministry, arguing in the court that homosexuality was immoral. This was followed by the Health Ministry telling the court that there was no error in decriminalising homosexuality. The continuous change in stance by the Govt. attracted the ire of Supreme Court. The 4th edition of Bangalore Queer Film Festival was also held successfully in February.

Hearing of arguments by the Supreme Court continued throughout March, and gay rights groups presented their arguments in favour of decriminalization of homosexuality. I AM, Onir's crowd sourced movie which was a collection of four short stories, with one of them focusing on male child abuse and the other on homosexuality, bagged the National Award for the Best



Pink Pramanik

Hindi Film. Even when the court was hearing the petitions, in April the Punjab and Haryana High Court instructed the police to provide protection to a lesbian couple from Batinda who had run away from their homes.

May will be remembered as the month when Kashish-India's Queer Film Festival- got bigger and bolder. With a number of foreign and Indian films and celebrities including Anupam Kher and Resul Pookutty, everything about the film festival from the opening to closing ceremony was star-studded. Homophobia raised its ugly head again when a transgender activist was murdered in Kerala.

June, being the month of gay pride march across the world, was eventful in India as well. Kolkata held its 1st sexuality focused art exhibition Broadening the Canvas, where the works of various renowned artists including Balbir Krishan, Anuradha Upadhyaya and Deepak Tandon were exhibited. Chennai too held a film festival, Colours of Sexuality, which was later followed by the pride parade



Kashish 2012



near the end of the month. Patna became the latest city to hold a gay pride march when a small group of 20 people marched in the city. The nation was also rocked by an unlikely controversy of a former national level female athlete being accused of raping another woman. Pinky Pramanik, a gold medalist in Asian Games 2006, had to undergo gender tests to prove herself as a girl. The case was handled in the most insensitive way by Kolkata police, and involved gross violations of her rights. It also brought into focus the issue of those who may be gender non-conforming, or intersexed.

Kolkata was in focus once again in July, this time for attracting around 1500 marchers to the pride parade, by far the largest that the city has seen. Temple city of Madurai too organized a pride walk, which was preceded by various activities to raise awareness among the population. In August, the Election Commission of India woke up to the hardships faced by many transgenders in getting a voter ID card with

the addition of "guru" and "chela" in the voter registration forms.

In Hyderabad, police denied permission to hold a gay pride march in September. Later that month, for the first time in the history of independent India, two transgenders - Kalki Subramiam and Akkai - were invited to Rashtrapati Bhavan for the swearing in ceremony of the new Chief Justice of India Justice Altamas Kabir. Denied permission to hold a march, Hyderabad instead hosted an art exhibition titled 'Exclusively Inclusive' on pluralities of gender and sexuality in October. The Mumbai Film Festival that was held in October had a number of films dealing with alternate sexuality.

November was again full of activities across India. If people in Delhi marched

demanding gay rights, those in Kolkata enjoyed the three day film festival Dialogues, whereas Bangaloreans had a host of events to attend, including a pride mela, plays etc before the actual march on Dec 2. The 2nd LGBT Pride and HIV awareness walk was also held in Pune.

Although Supreme Court had heard petitions from both the sides, the year ended without any judgement on the issue of decriminalization of homosexuality; which means 2013 could be the year when a final verdict on the issue is passed. On a brighter note, Hyderabad received permission to have its first gay pride march in 2013. With so many positive developments in 2012, we hope the year 2013 ushers in more positive change in the Indian society.





Gay Or Straight

You Can Make It In America

Bharathi pens down his thoughts after Obama's victory

One of my friends was really sad and angry with Obama's win. He and I are both at the same stage of our life with almost similar credentials and have applied for a skilled professional job here. He noticed I was happy and said, "Dude, you do realize that you and I have everything to lose because of this?" I did realize that. I did have everything to lose except one thing. I can't tell him what that was.

Yeah, my future looks bleak, my chances of succeeding in America is going down and it's true that I may even have to drop all my endeavors and go back to India. I am not an American, I had no vote and I had nothing to do with the Presidential election but I feel happy. I feel validated. Because this was a victory for human rights. A man has won, who respects human rights and who wants everyone to have the same rights no matter who you love. He has won in a land where people have started to

respect the differences and have started to realize that this is how history is going to roll. I am happy to be here to see history in the making. All four ballot measures on gay rights emerged victorious. Millions of people in those states setting an example to the rest of America and to the entire world on acceptance. My future may not look good, but the president summed it up nicely about what I should feel, in his victory speech."Gay or Straight, you can make it in America"

It felt like he talked to me personally. I know I haven't been optimistic or hopeful about my future in the past but now I want to make it in America and I am going to try for it. Thank you Mr. President, though you are not my President literally. But I wish you were.

You made this world a much better place to live for people like me.



INDIA

★Sappho for Equality, an organisation working for LBT women in Kolkata, received the Go Visible Award from International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) for its work towards promoting LGBTI rights; empowering LGBTI people. ([Read More](#))

★The 6th edition of Dialogues- The Annual Calcutta LGBT Film & Video Festival – was held from 23rd-25th Nov.

★Delhi, Bangalore and Pune held pride marches in Nov and Dec. While the Delhi March was on Nov 25th, Bangalore pride march was on Dec 2nd and Pune LGBT Pride and HIV awareness walk was held on Dec 9th.

★Sahodari Foundation announced the free



training program for transgender(FTM & MTF), Hijra and intersex people from Tamil Nadu and Kerala in citizen journalism video film making.

★Police have given the permission to hold a gay pride march in Hyderabad in February.

★Mumbai's Queer Azadi March will be on 2nd February.

G-NEWS: World

and other conservative groups in the country against the bill.

★A Russian Court dismissed the case against pop star Madonna. Madonna was being tried under the new anti-gay laws of St. Petersburg which debar people from speaking out in favour of homosexuality.

★ Supreme Court of Nepal recognized a live-in relationship between two lesbians in the country.

DIALOGUES 2012

Anirban dropped by Max Mueller Bhavan to watch the movies being screened at DIALOGUES the Annual Calcutta LGBT Film & Video Festival that was held from 23rd -25th Nov

I used to hear Kolkata is dead silent on any LGBT event. Although it may not be known in the party-circles but when it comes to any major annual event, the City of Joy is not way behind any-other metropolis of India. Dialogues 2012 will manifest such fact. The timing of this event coincided with the pride marches of Delhi and Bangalore. I had made a brief stop-over at Kolkata on 24th Nov 2012. The film festival was already running, having started the previous day and ending on 25th Nov 2012.

So I had a chance to visit it and sneak into the event on 24th Nov 2012. The organizers had done a good job by holding the event in one of the most coveted places of the city- Max Mueller Bhavan, Kolkata. When I visited, I think multiple events were underway at Max Mueller Bhavan but Dialogues'2012 took the center-stage. I didn't get a chance to have a glimpse at the entire line of movies but whatever I managed was really informative.

Here is a sneak preview of the movies that I managed to watch.

In the afternoon a series of short films were lined up under the section- Dresden shorts. Out of all the short features in that section the one I liked the most is 'Dik' - a contribution from Australia. The father of a six year old boy becomes anxious and impatient when he discovers '*I like tims dik*' on the boy's class drawing assignment. He becomes extra-cautious when his son colours the grass pink instead of green. When the father takes up the matter with the mother the same night both of them jostles into their





(Top)Rituparno Ghosh and Jisshu Sengupta at Dialogues; (Left) Anindya Hajra and Meenakshi, organisers of the Film Festival on stage

Pictures by: Anirban

possible gay experiences. The comic associated with this short feature is quite impeccable especially the ending when the father discovers that 'dik' in '*I like times dik*' actually means bike and not what he thought it to be.

Another movie which caught my attention was 'Eyes Wide Open'. This is a 2009 Israeli movie from the staples of the Israeli film director Haim Tabakman. It made an appearance at Cannes also. Aaron, married with four kids, lives in an ultra-orthodox Jewish neighbourhood. He reopens the family run butcher's shop after his father's death. A chance meeting with a homeless

Yeshiva student, Ezri, who happens to visit his shop for a telephone call, changes the whole paradox of his life. Aaron offers to help Ezri as his apprentice when he discovers Ezri asleep in the local synagogue. The two men eventually become too close to each-other and end up in an intangible gay relationship. Aaron's wife Rivka, though suspicious, remains devoted to him. But the relationship between these two men doesn't evade the eyeballs of the neighbourhood. Aaron is warned off Ezri's non-righteousness and his ex-communication from the local Yeshiva, repeatedly. Flyers are circulated stating impure meat is being distributed

in the neighbourhood. Being on the brink of a social and commercial boycott of Aaron family, both Aaron and Ezri realize it is time to go on their own separate ways. But just before this, Ezri encounters his former lover and even enters into a scuffle with him and local youths. The film ends with Aaron arriving at the spot to a take bath where Ezri had once invited him on the outskirts of the city.

I was willing to watch Rituparno Ghosh's *Chitrangada-A crowning wish* in the concluding day but alas! I was southern bound to Orissa on the same day, but I indeed had an entertaining stay in Kolkata, thanks to Dialogues' 2012.

The Queer India European Tour

Indian queer films were on a European tour with Sridhar Rangayan, reports **Tanika Godbole**



Sridhar Rangayan at Watch Docs Human Rights Film Festival, Warsaw

From the 21st of November to the 16th of December, Europe got a glimpse into the LGBT world of India. *Queer India* - Sridhar Rangayan's Europe tour- travelled to Brighton, London, Dublin, Stockholm and Warsaw. This tour showcased many of his award-winning films. Sridhar, who is an IIT graduate hailing from Mandya, Karnataka screened his films like *Gulabi Aaina* about drag queens, that was banned by the censor board in 2003 to *Yours Emotionally*; which is about a British gay man falling in love with a man from an Indian town who is bisexual; to *68 Pages* which raises the issue of AIDS Awareness.

It was during Rangayan's several conferences on film making and LGBT rights in Europe that many universities and organizations expressed interest in screening his films as well as holding talks and debates. The Queer India European Tour was thus born out of this, as a way to create discussion over LGBT issues in India.

"The tour is mainly about cinema as a means of raising discussions about LGBT lives and issues in contemporary India," says Rangayan. His films that are inspired by people in real life



each offer a glimpse from a different side, about a different issue concerning LGBT India.

He is also combining the film screenings with talks and discussions about the LGBT in India. The Queer India European Tour took place in collaboration with University of Sussex, University of Westminster, University of Dublin, Watch Docs Human Rights Film Festival to name a few.

"Bollywood cinema has corrupted and stereotyped LGBT characters and made it unpalatable to most people. But the new Indian queer cinema is sensitive, subtle and

offers a realistic portrayal that surely will help in building rational and positive attitudes towards the LGBT community. It is a thrust in the right direction, with the right attitude," he says.

So far, the festival has received tremendous support, as his films are able to break through the barriers of background and culture and appeal to universal sensibilities. "Imagine a houseful audience at the large Old Cinema in London on a rainy winter day. That surely shows a growing interest and appreciation of Indian queer cinema and culture," he says. "I only wish these were ticketed events so that I could take back some money for the young filmmakers."

The festival also showed the trailer for *Breaking Free*, Rangayan's upcoming documentary feature film. He has also been travelling to smaller cities and towns in India, which are also opening up to homosexuality. "India is too vast and diverse a country for the changes to be homogenous across India, but there is no going back anymore. Queer India is definitely out of the closet," he says.



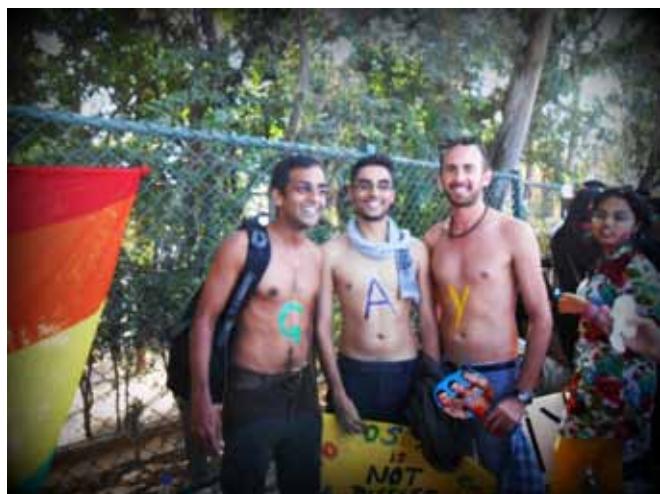
Lef (top): Sridhar with panelists at Brighton Film Festival
Left(Bottom) and Above:Screening at University of Westminster London

THE B'LORE QUEER FILM FESTIVAL

#BQFF 2013 | FEB 22, 23 & 24
Alliance Francaise de Bangalore

Bangalore Pride Walk 2012

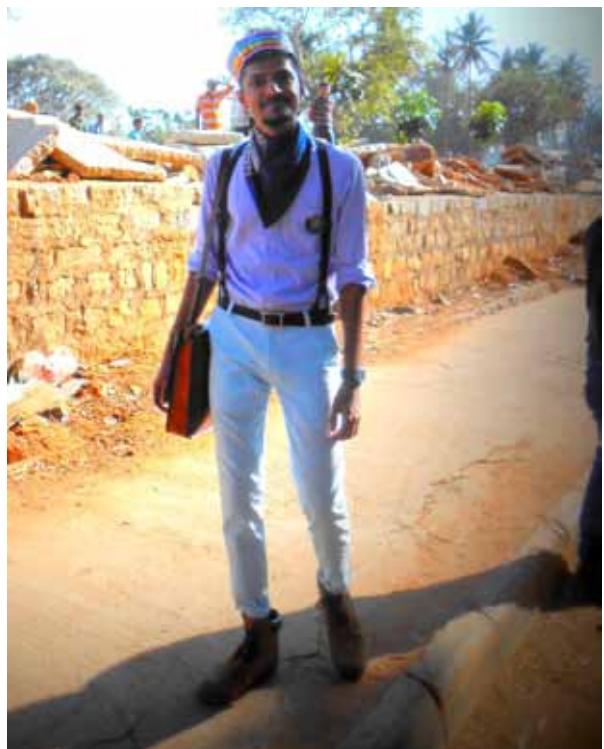
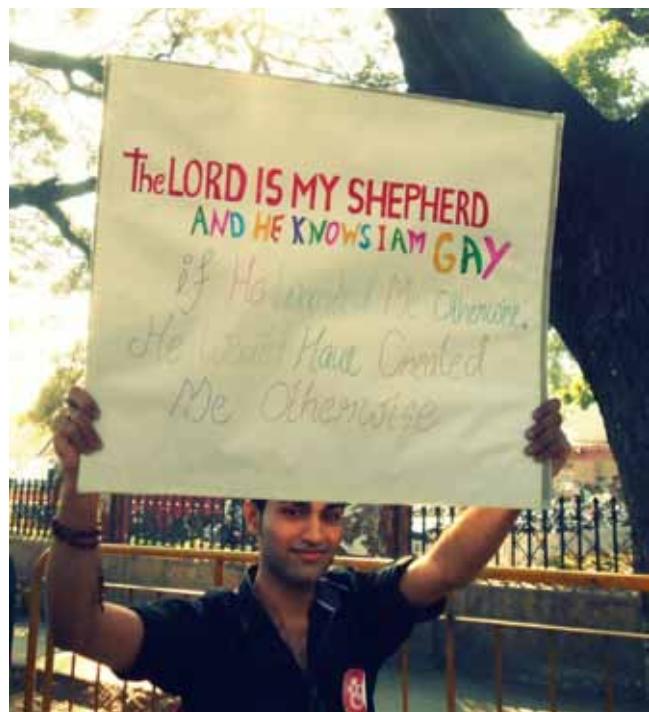
More than 1000 people marched in Bangalore on Dec 2, demanding gay rights and anti-discrimination laws

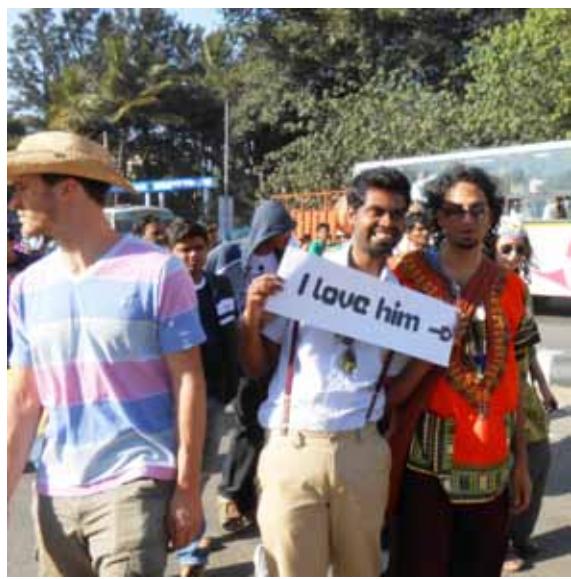




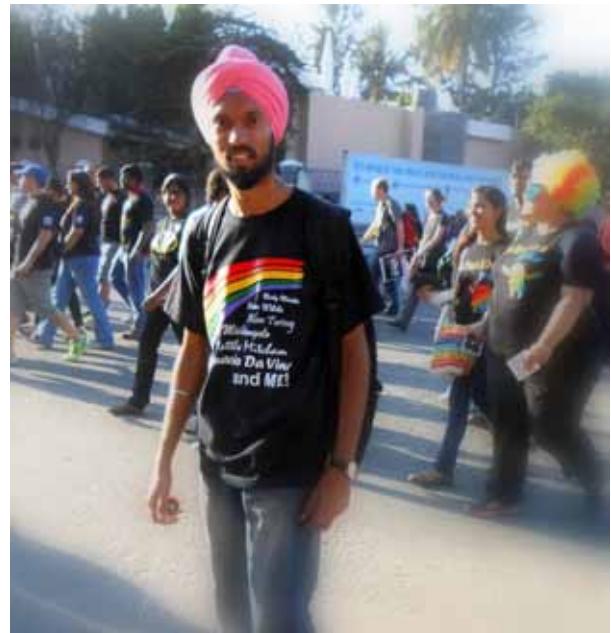












Delhi Pride 2012

These amazing pictures are taken by Eric Johnson-Vik











Pune Pride

LGBT Pride and HIV awareness walk in Pune - spearheaded by Samapathik Trust was held on Dec 9. Balachandran Ramiah captured some moments from the walk





Sweetheart, I have to Confess

Muhammad Moiz writes a letter to his Ex



Hello Sweetheart,

Despite the fact that in no culture of the world would you be considered "sweet", yet I choose to call you sweet. This is because unlike yourself, I value you. Just like I value the old socks in my closet; the ones with holes and mismatched pairs.

Sweetheart, guess what? You suck! And no I don't mean it sexually because between me and you we both know that you don't suck, obviously because you still have internalized homophobia. Rarely has there been a time when I have ventured back into the deep crevices of my numbed mind, thought about you and realized, yes there's the man who I have always needed. And I pity myself more than I pity your lack of usefulness over why, good Lord why, I chose you over choosing no one in fact! Yes baby, I would have been way better off alone. The sex would have been better, too.

So before I actually begin with recounting my experiences (read: misfortunes) with yourself, let's get down to one basic fact. The perfume you wear is feminine, very feminine. So feminine that I am pretty sure its bottle reads "for women". But you must have been so busy being your pretentious self in the shop you would have forgotten to see the label correctly. And if I liked women's perfume honey, I would have been straight; fortunately, which I am not. That doesn't take a genius to figure out.

So let's begin Mon Amor. French kissing (or even Pakistani kissing) is done with an open mouth. Not a closed one. There is a difference between sucking on mommy's nipples and kissing your darned boyfriend. But given the stakes of your immaturity I can presume that you are still stuck on the breast-feeding stage in your head. For the sake of humanity, please kiss with a relaxed mouth, not like a patient with a lock-jaw. Be as open with your mouth as you are with

your fantasy problems; which are many, and imaginary, and annoying. But hey! At least there is something you are "open" about.

Secondly darling, I am about to tell you something. It is definitely going to be very difficult for you to understand. It is indeed a very, very, difficult concept. It actually might take some time to sink in. so I am going to say it quite slowly. Sweetheart, "you are not the center of the universe". Yes, I know, that's what mommy told you, and yes that's what the-guy-who-wants-to-get-in-your-pants-because-he-is-as-foolish-as-I-was tells you too. But it's not true. So stop trying to be the magnificence personified divinity, that you so are not. Do that for poor old Divinity's sake, if not your own.

Honey, gay guys have problems. Straight guys have them too. And guys who don't know whether they are straight nor gay (which is most of them) have them as well. Having an issue is one thing, marinating in your issues like a Christmas turkey is another. Our house maid complains less about her mother-in-law than you do. And baby, I like having fun, which you are helplessly helpless in providing me any. So atleast add a little fling of adventure to you. No one is asking you to go scaling Mount Everest, even the mountain will laugh at the sight of you trying to do that, but atleast have some "fun" in yourself. A little touch of spontaneity. Trust me it won't hurt more than falling off your bed; which was the cause celeb of your life giving rise to Lord knows how many Facebook statuses.

Another thing baby. There is a reason why people admire Shabana Azmi. And there is a reason why people "admire" Rakhi Sawant. Between the two, which one do you think they'd have in their heart and which one in their bed? So what would you rather work upon; your physicality or your personality?

And yes, watch porn. And read a good sex magazine. If anyone needs that, it's the guard of our street, and you. Oops I just spilled the beans.



Yours forever, my bad luck!



What Matters In The End?

Karan Sood talks about why and how does a relationship turn with time

There was a king who made love to his mistress, behind his wife. And one day, the betrayal landed up in front of the Queen. He did everything to save his marriage. But for whom? Love, family or Society?

As most people perceive, gay relationships does not involve much role of society (unless you are out to your circle) and family (unless you adopted a child, both being a rare thing in typical Indian society). So, love is all it takes to hold their relationship. But, why would someone have a physical relationship with some other guy, unless he is

not happily committed with his partner?

"We are not much connected with one another anymore."

"I thought he too is seeing someone else."

"Even after months of commitment, he never satisfied me."

And, the list goes on when one had to blame his partner for the betrayal he devised. But, this story doesn't hold a bad partner. What if they were happily committed for say a year, and then someday, he did it. He had sex with someone else.

Should he be courageous to tell his partner that he did

so, or should he hide it from him? Will his partner forgive him or is it the "The End" of their love story?

It isn't an easy thing, i.e. being faithful in a gay relationship. There is continuous churning of emotions in and around, that too when most can't drop those emotions to the people living around them. The kind of relationship I am talking about are all serious relationships. Relationships that hold soul mates theorem, relationships that are beyond parties and post parties, those selfless relationships that everyone desires at a time in life, but unfortunately couldn't meet up

the requirements.

What does a relationship actually require? Why and how it turns with time? And finally what matters in the end? That's all I will talk about. I may sound subjective over emotions but the subject actually needs that delicate treatment under strong shoulders.

Is love all that is needed? Definitely not. Because love is never a need but an outcome of our needs. You need to be cared, and that might someday turn into love. You desire cuddling, kissing, holding, you need someone to understand you, hold you when you need, and be faithful to you, that makes you to love him or her.

But, do you realize how risky are your needs? Have you ever seen any advertisement of mutual funds? They generally start with a line saying, "Mutual funds investments are subject to market change, please read

Love is never a need but an outcome of our needs

the documents carefully before investing." Relationships too hold the same *funda*. It's not a personal bond, but a mutual one that too subjected to market change. And reading the person is as important as reading those documents. And we read our counterpart to have their care, faith, trust and finally love. Risks are always involved- risk of being hurt, being betrayed, or hurting the other person. The market (circumstances, emotions) is always changing, and it's always up to you how long you will hold the investment in the funds (or relationship), irrespective of the crunches visible in the market.

Relationships these days



do start on bed (couch-toilets-cars-etc), but that should and can never be the first document to be read, and if done, the relationship will surely won't last long. Remember, market change is never in our hand.

As relationship ages, love grows, but it also witness the differences you both hold, which may range from food to positions, ideologies to expressions. There always comes a time when you think you can't take it anymore, and as in a gay relationship you aren't bonded legally to be together, the thoughts of break up may conquer your mind. You may plan a betrayal, you may sleep with someone else, but remember what matters in the end? A click of a second, and parts of wounded emotions create a trauma leaving behind the pages you both wrote together for your present and future. A wrong stitch may ruin everything you have knit for years. But, giving a chance in love is always feasible.

And you know what matters in the end? It's that he makes you happy out of anything and everything. Remember, this moment is momentary, life's way far beyond this.

The King indeed loved her wife (I know you may not agree), he obviously loved his family, and for the Kings, the society mattered a lot. And, among all that he chose happiness. And, he did all to regain it.

Rediscovering with Pride

With a new found freedom after his divorce, the Bangalore Pride this year was a special one for **Anirban**



I definitely have seen over thirty 2nd of Decembers, but this second day of the last month of 2012 will forever leave a mark in my memory. The day was nothing less than a re-discovery for me. This must be a self-journey of almost two years. I always was a self-loather. It was not related to me being gay but rather I used to be engraved in a feeling of the greatest dumb-ass among them. Perhaps few incidents in my life had made me feel like that.

It was almost in early April 2010 that I came out to my spouse after an erratic errand from my native place, Kolkata. This must have been a great day for me but definitely not for my family life. Because it signalled the beginning of the wide rift between two people who were definitely enjoying their family life prior to it. Six months after that neither me nor my wife were really in good talking terms. We were just carrying on. My long lived smile had already vanished and more than her it was me who was engrossed in the feelings of guilt, shame and despair. I felt being in a vicious trap. She continued to be in a denial mode despite going through countless internet and friendly chats with her close friends. But how long could it have continued? In one such day of despair, I dreamt of a freedom, a self happiness. Perhaps thoughts make dreams and dreams make things. And finally it happened when both of us decided to part ways. This was definitely not the end of the road.

After we filed for the first motion



of MCD (Mutual Consent Divorce) way back in March 2012, I came back to Bangalore with not so high hopes. I continued to be in the mode of self-pity and self-loathing. My parents raised apprehensions of me staying alone in a big city. It was obvious for them. But I had to embrace the life I have chosen. I was though not able to figure it out. Every time I faced the mirror, I did not like the face and the features I have. So I may have come out as gay but definitely did not love myself at any cost. A chance meeting with a yoga instructor was perhaps going to throw away all the lids of the bottles of feelings that I had bound within me. I was not changing into a saint but what the instructor let me understand was the importance of health, which I was definitely neglecting. In the next few months I began to concentrate on my health. I became almost a complete vegan. Asanas, Pranayamas and meditation became almost like daily routine. In April 2012 I was about 65 Kg but in just about four months my weight became 55 KG which is quite near to my BMI. I became slimmer and I have never seen before the flexibility I have gained. My feelings of an unhappy family life were long lost. I began to meet friends I knew.

I realized my sense of déjà-vu of my hard work on 2nd Dec. I was one among the thousands who were walking down the city's roads showing placards and marching for the pride. But I was in my own sway-song. I overheard a couple of guys of nearly my age and who are known to me. They remarked, 'How this guy is so slim?' My faith catapulted to greater heights when while returning home after the pride march I entered into a friendly chat with my fellow passenger in the bus. In the long chat that ensued between us one of the statements he said 'You don't seem to have over seven years of industry experience. You look so young. I must confess I thought you are a student who has just a come to join a company as a fresher'. I am not sure whether these were flattery or just comments.

Pride marches will continue to come and go. But these few people have me made realize that I am no way behind anybody. I may not be a next door handsome guy but I am neither a next door loath-able dog. I am surely now proud of myself. I have rather become choosy on many aspects including that of gay world's most wanted stuffs.

Feelings of a Gay Muslim

What is the future of gays in a Muslim society? Asks Saad Zahid, and writes about his fears and apprehensions of living as a gay man in Pakistan

The ember in my heart might enunciate my feelings of being gay especially Gay Muslim. What is my crime being a Muslim? That I have likings towards boys and I want to spend my life with another guy?

Will a Muslim society ever provide rights to homosexuals? This perturbs me all the time. Homosexuality is often misunderstood by many Muslim societies. Although, Islam does not promote homosexuality at all. But "being gay does not mean Allah (God) hates you". God is the creator of the whole universe, how could He hate his own creation?

A typical Muslim society does not even know what the word "gay" means? Let's see it in a more specific aspect; in terms of a "Pakistani Muslim Society". I am very sorry to say that Pakistanis, in fact most Pakistanis do not even know what "gay" means? It is often confused

with transgender here in Pakistan. People normally call transgenders gay. I have seen many times, people in their 50's say, "Look! A gay is coming, don't go near him and the one who is walking by is a poor transgender.

Second misconception here is that people think if somebody is gay, then he is a sexaholic. In reality it is not like that, I personally think being a gay is not all about sex. We gays don't only run after sex. We have feelings, we have hearts; it hurts us when people make fun of us. We don't want sex all the time; we want love, peace, a life partner to spend our lives with.

We gays in Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Dubai spend countless hours sitting alone and thinking, 'Will we ever have courage to come out of this closet?'

I want to tell my family about me. I am afraid they will disown me. I love my Mom and Dad so much; I can't even think to degrade them in front of the whole society. I don't want them to be boycotted by society. I will never like it if they are subjected to funny jokes in the social circle just because their son is gay.

You know what? Typical Pakistani parents want their son to complete studies, get a job and then get married and give them grandchildren with whom they can spend their retired life.

My heart is heavy with many woes. Every time my parents discuss my marriage in front of my brothers and sisters, I just have to smile, try to change topic or leave the room silently without letting them know about the hurricane in my mind and heart.

I can't discuss boys with friends just like



straight people discuss girls. I unwillingly have to discuss girls at school and college with fellows. I don't want to be called emasculate by announcing 'Hey guys! I am gay.'

Each time my straight friends make fun of gay guys, I am there with them, sad and silent. I can't say anything to support gays. I don't want to get humiliated in front of the whole crowd and then maybe the whole college.

I am not envious of my fellow Gay brothers living in an entirely different scenario from mine. They have freedom of expression, I don't. They are open to their family and friends, I can't even think to do so.

A John says to his father, "Hey Dad, I am going on date with my friend this valentine."

And an Ali can't even think to tell his father that he likes boys. This is the difference between a Muslim and non-Muslim gay.

My life is dreadful. Let's not discuss that now, that's an altogether different issue. How could I have freedom of discussing sex, more specifically gay sex, when I can't think to tell others that I am gay?

My nights are lonely. Nights of American,

Italian, Swedish gays is full of life, party, fun. And on the other side, the night of a Pakistani gay like me is virulent. I just can't stop walking in my room thinking about my future. What am I going to do? Will I have to marry a girl as done by many other Pakistani gays due to the pressure from their family?

The time our gay fellows in London, San Francisco, Berlin plan for a gay pool party, we gays in Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Dubai spend countless hours sitting alone and thinking, 'Will we ever have courage to come out of this closet?'

This closet is suffocating. It has made our life foggy, we can't even look at other guys just because of the fear of being caught and then punished or boycotted.

The time Neil and Joe, Lee and Christian, Patrick and Kurt are making guest list and deciding on the menu and venue of their weddings, The Gay Weddings, Ahmed, Saadii, Fahad are sitting in their dark rooms thinking, "Will I ever get the chance to marry a guy?" with tears in their eyes.

What is the future of gay Muslims in this society?



photo: flickr/anemoneprojector

STRAIGHT TALK:

Time To Vote



Political empowerment is the need of the hour, and LGBTs should raise their issues with parties, writes **Saurabh Sharma**

India, post independence, was built on the principles of justice, equality and freedom for all citizens. The universal adult franchise (voting rights for all) was highly remarkable in view of the vast size of the country, its huge population, high poverty, social inequality and overwhelming illiteracy. This made Indian democracy broad based, enhanced the self respect and prestige of common people, upheld the principle of equality, enabled minorities to protect their interests and opened new hopes and vistas for weaker sections. The basic aim was the empowerment and mobilisation of all.

But it could be argued that these instruments were implemented in letter, not in spirit. There's still a huge gap in reality. For example it was only recently that ECI (Electoral

Commission of India) decided to give recognition on voter forms to those who see themselves as neither male nor female. All these years this community was deprived of voting rights because they did not have a box to tick. In my opinion, our society is still not ready to accept them. Thanks to those in the power corridors like Justice Shah and others who have shown their concern and mettle despite the hostility that still exists, there is a ray of hope for LGBT community. You must have experienced the popular support Anna enjoyed last year. He literally forced the Parliament to pass a resolution for enacting an ombudsman. All he did was provide a platform to people frustrated with corruption. His movement was based on a rational, logical and sound ideology. You too have that. Everyone joined it irrespective of caste, creed, race, religion, region etc. I don't propose a likewise





VOTE

movement for the LGBT community in the near future. But I do believe that political empowerment is the need of the hour. Our society preaches the notion of equality but doesn't practice it in spirit. It's a vicious circle. So if you want to change the pattern, beliefs, customs, norms of this hypocritical Indian society, then you have to come out in public domain.

You need to reach the power corridors to put forth your voice. It will give you fresh avenues to get what you deserve. If the whole educated LGBT community strives for it, then it can create wonders, and in my personal opinion, the present LGBT's share a logical and rational approach towards life, its values, objectives and means of attaining them, as they have been victimized by the ill, outdated and hypocritical laws, values, beliefs of the society. *The only way to change it is from above.* Just imagine what will happen when your voice will be raised in parliament/state assemblies by your MPs and will be aired on TVs, internet, mobiles etc. You can educate the new generation about your issues in a just, rational and broad way through mass media. **You can get bills passed, laws related to your longstanding issues which can accelerate the assimilation of your community in the**

mainstream society.

But the pre-requisite of this utopia is to *come out*. In my previous posts too I have stressed that. At least vote and choose your candidate unanimously. Elections are soon going to be held, parties are always searching for vote banks. You need to make them realize that you are the one that they are searching for. You can

bargain your voting power for your longstanding issues. I think parties will not hesitate in extending their helping hand. Why can't all LGBTs act as one vote, at least to further their own interests, issues? And then slowly and gradually you can choose to fight elections after attaining political maturity.

Our society preaches the notion of equality but doesn't practice it in spirit. So if you want to change the pattern, beliefs, customs, norms of this hypocritical Indian society, then you have to come out in public domain

I know there will be problems, but your unity and determination could sail your boat easily in those hard times too. So first prepare yourself to cast your vote in upcoming state assembly elections, and then use that experience to utilize your power in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. It's a great power at your disposal. It has created histories, but now is the time for you to utilize this power to live your life in a dignified and meaningful manner which is your fundamental right.



CHRISTMAS:

A Time Of Miracles

Smile and be happy and let go off your pains, because light kills darkness, writes **Rohan Noronha**

I am a simple guy from Kolkata writing this to you, but I surely feel there is a reason as to why we connected. Maybe there is a chance that you and I would meet someday, because from the time I was a child my dream has been to reach out and help. After reading your letters and messages, I would only want you to do one thing, which will change your life for the good. I want you to start focusing now only on the blessings you have. I know what you mentally are going through and there are many days and nights when you silently cry, and there isn't anyone at all to hear them flow or watch them dry. But trust me the angels are always walking by your side and they are erasing every pain you have, just trust them in doing that.

I have been through a lot myself, from home abuse to child sexual abuse, spiritual abuse and relationship abuse, you name it and I have been through it. But you know what? It's not that I surrendered to them all, I just allowed the flow to happen, because I cannot rush my destiny and time on this wonderful planet. And yes, I don't dwell on it, I jump over it and move on.

We all come here with pre-karmic destinies and we also fulfill it in our own ways big and small. I don't know what your purpose in life is, maybe you only would have an answer to it when you sit in silence and meditate. Now with meditation I don't mean you sit and chant away with eyes closed. Take a walk around your neighborhood and appreciate small things

around. For example, a child's smile, a puppy, an old couple, a young couple, whatever brings that smile in you from within.

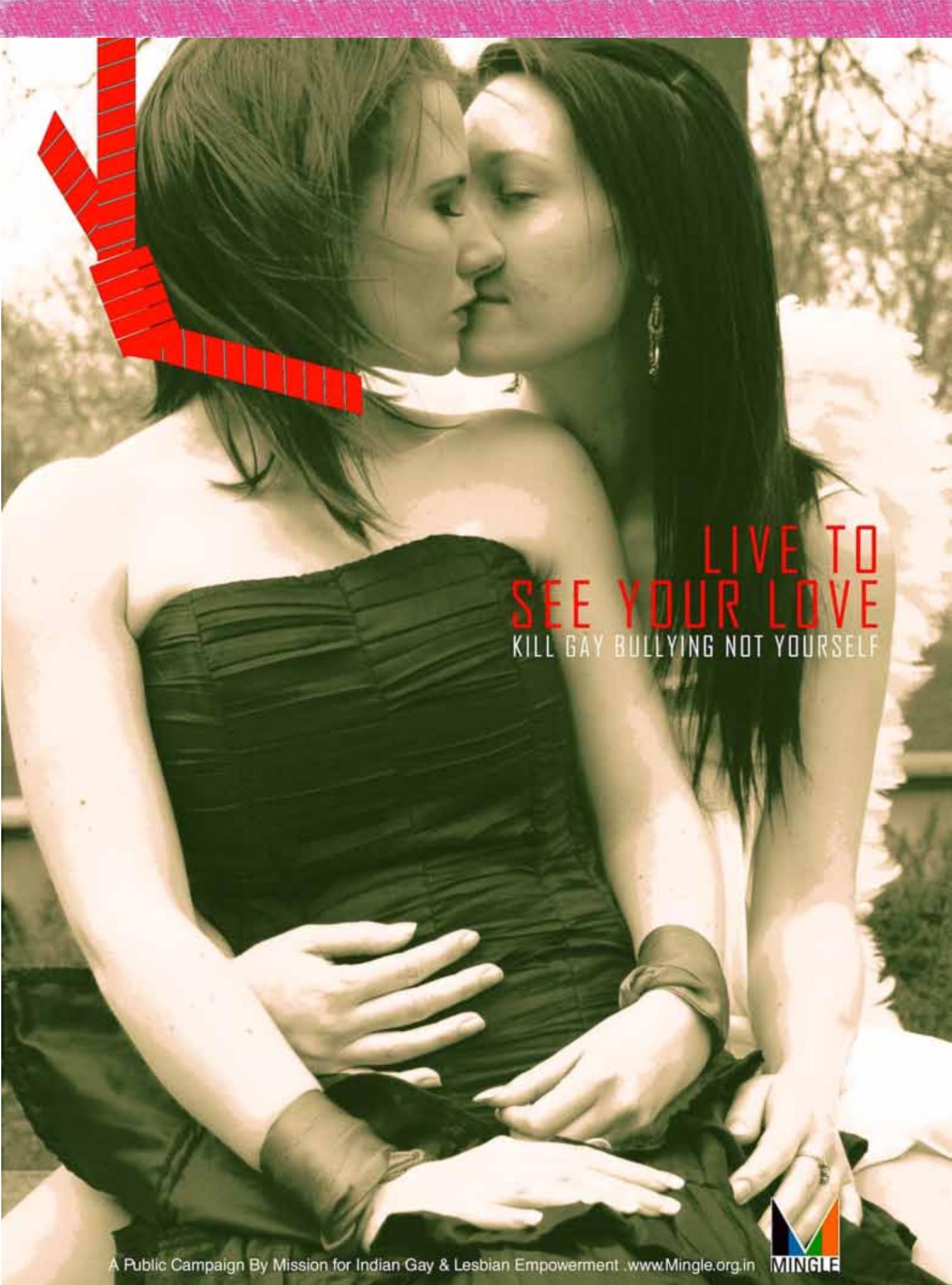
In India, the gay community is very unforgiving. And if you are above 30 which I am, you are considered a hag. But again, I stood up last week, shook myself off the pain and hurt and said to myself that I have a life and my purpose will be fulfilled. To hell with anyone who brings me down, for I shall not allow them to do so. I choose not to be a victim, I choose to be a warrior, and I shall win this battle. Not only for me but for my lovable earth angels such as you.

I am honored to have you as an earth angel and I am honored to have your trust as well. I promise you to be by your side always, in spirit as of now and when I meet you in person, a warm hug will be your first gift I give you. Please promise me you will smile and let go off the pains slowly, and promise me that because I am a medium and an empath and I feel the pain which gives me sleepless nights.

So promise me if you really care for me, give me that assurance that you will change your life around starting now. And yes, from now on even if you have to fake it, do it. I want to see one positive post on your status every day. Because only light kills darkness, and you my friend have an abundance of it, which isn't allowed to shine.

So smile and be happy, Christmas is surely a time of miracles.





LIVE TO
SEE YOUR LOVE

KILL GAY BULLYING NOT YOURSELF

SUPPORT GROUPS FOR LGBT

WEST BENGAL

THE PRATYAY GENDER TRUST

Contact person : Anindya Hajra
Address : 293 Jodhpur Park , Calcutta, Pin 700 068
Phone : 033 2464 1893

E-mail :
pratyaygendertrust@yahoo.co.in

Target populations : Hijras, MSM (particularly kotis)

DURBAR MAHILA SAMANWAYA COMMITTEE

Contact person : Mrinal Kanti Dutta
Address : 12/5 Nilmoni Mitra Street, Kolkata West Bengal, India
Phone : 033 2543 7451 / 7560, +91-33 2530 3148
Email: dmsc@durbar.org

Website:
<http://www.durbar.org/>

Target populations : Female, Male and Transgender sex workers

SAATHII CALCUTTA

Contact person : Pawan Dhall, Chief Coordinator
Address : 229 Kalitala Main Road, Purbanchal (N), Kolkata Pin 700 064
Phone : 033 2484-4835
E-mail : saathii@yahoo.com / pawan30@yahoo.com
Website : www.saathii.org
Target populations : MSM in general, male sex workers, transgender people, bisexuals

Sappho

Contact person : Malavika
Address : 11A Jogendra Gardens(South),Ground Floor, Kolkata, Pin 700 078
Phone : 033 2441 9995

Email: malvi99@hotmail.com , sappho1999@rediffmail.com

Website:

<http://sapphokolkata.org/>

Target Population : Lesbians and bisexual women

Prantik Bongaon

Contact person : Niloy Basu
Address : C/o Niloy Basu, Peada Para, P.O. Bongaon, Pin 743 235
Phone : 91 3251 257 029, 9332254855
E-mail : ajnil@rediffmail.com / ajnil123@rediffmail.com

Target populations : Hijras, Kothis, MSM in general

Northern Black Rose

Contact person : Souvik Ghosal
Address : C/o Hori Roy, M. B. Mukherjee Nursing Home, Hill Cart Road, Rajani Bagan, Khudiram Palli, Silliguri 734 401
Phone : 91-9433009116

E-mail:
northenblack_rose@yahoo.co.in

Target populations : Hijras, Meitis, other sexual minorities,

Astitva Dakshin

Contact person : Debasish Mitra
Address : C/o Bablu Bajikar, Baruipur Ukilpara, Kolkata 700144
Phone : 91-9836185589, 9830837440

E-mail :
astitvadakshin@yahoo.co.in

Target populations : Hijras, Kothis

Madhya Banglar Sangram

Contact person : Arunava Nath
Address : Kazi Ali Aftab VIII. Goaljan, P.O. Radharghat, P.S. Berhampore
Phone: 91 9932760967, 9232694700
E-mail:
sangram_06@hotmail.com

SWIKRITI

Contact person : Rajarshi Chakraborty, Secretary

Address : 42/57 DumDum Road, Kolkata 700074

Phone : +91 9831743608, 9433009190

E-mail:
swikriti2003@hotmail.com

Target populations : Bisexual women, lesbians, MSM in general, transgender people

PEOPLE LIKE US (PLUS)

Contact person : Agniva Lahiri
Address : 254, Bonomali Bannerjee Road, Kolkata - 700082, West Bengal, India

Phone : 033 2402 9305
E-mail : pluskolkata@gmail.com

Target populations : Support group for young gender variants

SWAPNIL

Contact person : SUMAN RUDRA

Address : Kotalhat Dist-Burdwan, P.O. Burdwan, Pin 751015, West Bengal

Phone : 09932241372

E-mail :
swapnil_burdwan@yahoo.co.in

Target populations : MSM & TG Groups

MAHARASHTRA

Samapathik Trust, Pune

Contact person : Bindumadhav Khire

Address : Samapathik Trust, 1004 Budhwar Peth, Office No. 9, 3rd Floor, Building Name: Rameshwar Market, Pune

Phone : (020) 6417 9112

E-mail :
samapathik@hotmail.com



Send us your feedback, suggestions, articles and coming out experiences to:
editor@gaylaxymag.com

